

DATINGMATTERS®

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE HEALTHY TEEN RELATIONSHIPS

DATING MATTERS PARENT PROGRAMS: AT-A-GLANCE

The **Dating Matters Parent Programs**—one component of the Dating Matters comprehensive prevention model—provide parents of 11- to 14-year-olds with skills for positive parenting and healthy, effective parent-child communication while also helping them engage in dialogue with their kids about healthy, safe relationships. Teaching parents and other caregivers how to have difficult conversations with teens about dating helps caregivers communicate messages about healthy and safe dating relationships. These conversations also allow parents and caregivers to convey accurate information about safe relationships and open the door for continued positive discussions throughout adolescence.

Parents and other caregivers are critical for preventing teen dating violence. Parents are uniquely positioned to help their children live stronger, healthier lives. By establishing and modeling healthy relationships of their own, parents can impart their desired values and expectations for the relationships their children will have throughout their lives.

Dating Matters includes three programs designed for parents of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders to:

- encourage positive, strong parent-child communication,
- educate parents on teen dating violence and ways they can help protect their child, and
- help parents engage in open, ongoing dialogue with their teens that communicates their values, expectations, and support related to healthy relationships.

Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships

is a comprehensive teen dating violence prevention model. Dating Matters focuses on 11- to 14-year-olds and is based on the best available evidence on what works to prevent teen dating violence. It includes multiple components that target individuals, peers, families, schools, and neighborhoods. These components work together to promote respectful, nonviolent teen dating relationships.

In addition to the Parent Programs, the Dating Matters model also includes:

- Capacity Assessment and Planning Tool
- Youth Programs
- Guide to Informing Policy
- Training for Educators
- i2i Youth Communications Program
- Guide to Using Indicator Data

HOW WILL PARENTS BENEFIT FROM THE PROGRAMS?

The Dating Matters Parent Programs teach skills and knowledge to promote respectful, nonviolent dating relationships through strong parent-child communication and relationships. Through a mixture of information sharing, discussion, role plays, group exercises, and at-home practice, Dating Matters Parent Programs are designed to improve parents' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to teen dating violence and healthy relationships, and provide them with the skills they need to address these tough issues with their preteens and teens.



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control

WHAT ARE THE DATING MATTERS PARENT PROGRAMS?

Dating Matters includes three parent programs that teach skills and strategies to help parents protect their middle school students from teen dating violence. These programs were developed for parents of youth in grades 6, 7 and 8 as part of the Dating Matters model. However, the tools and ideas in these programs will likely be helpful for parents with children of all ages.

- **Parents Matter! for Dating Matters (6th Grade)** is designed to increase parents' ability to be an effective resource for their children regarding healthy relationships and to provide opportunities for parents to build positive parenting skills. Parents are empowered to increase their awareness of the issues children face; improve their ability to communicate with their children about healthy relationships and sexuality; and develop parenting practices that will decrease the likelihood of their children being exposed to unhealthy relationships. This program was adapted for Dating Matters from another CDC-developed parenting program (Parents Matter!).
- **Dating Matters for Parents (7th Grade)** is designed to provide strategies helpful in parenting adolescents. It includes strategies and skills to help parents communicate with their children about healthy relationships and sexual behaviors. Dating Matters for Parents includes both group and in-home sessions. The in-home sessions are designed to give parents an opportunity to practice the skills learned in the group setting. This program was developed by CDC Dating Matters.
- **Families for Safe Dates** is an evidence-based program delivered to parents of 8th graders. Participating families receive six booklets, one for parents only and five for parents and their teens to explore together to learn about different topics regarding teen dating violence. This program was developed by researchers and has been shown to be effective in preventing physical teen dating violence victimization.

Ideally, parents will have an opportunity to participate in all three years of Dating Matters programming while their children are in middle school.



WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE DATING MATTERS PARENT PROGRAMS?

Dating Matters Parent Programs are designed to help parents:

- **Build Knowledge** by educating them on:
 - healthy, unhealthy, and unsafe teen dating relationships;
 - warning signs for unhealthy teen dating behavior; and
 - the role of technology in teen dating (texting, social media, etc.).
- **Empower** their children to:
 - trust in what they know;
 - listen to their inner voice instead of outside pressures; and
 - define their own healthy, safe boundaries and comfort levels in teen dating and relationships.
- **Take Action** by empowering them to promote the growth of healthy relationships and discourage engagement in unhealthy and unsafe relationships.



HOW IS EACH PROGRAM DELIVERED?

Dating Matters includes three programs developed for parents of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Each program consists of six sessions or modules with a combination of in-person sessions and at-home sessions. The in-person sessions are delivered in a community setting at convenient times for parents, and are carried out by teachers, school staff, or outside program facilitators coordinated by the local health department or lead organization. The **Dating Matters Guide to Implementation** provides more detailed information on program delivery.

	Parents Matter! for Dating Matters (6th grade)	Dating Matters for Parents (7th grade)	Families for Safe Dates (8th grade)
Total sessions	6 in-person sessions	3 in-person and 3 at-home sessions	6 modules completed at-home by the parents with their teens
Session length	2.5 hours	1.5 hours for in-person sessions	45 minutes each
Session topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive parenting skills ● Effective parent-child communication on healthy relationship development and sexual health topics ● Relational and sexual risk behaviors of youth ● Healthy relationship modeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive parenting skills ● Open and effective parent-child communication ● Parental monitoring and supervising ● Constructive conflict resolution skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent-child communication skills ● Conflict resolution skills ● Teen dating violence ● Sexual dating violence ● Parental monitoring skills

STAFFING

Multiple staff are important to implementing the Dating Matters Parent Programs as part of the Dating Matters comprehensive prevention model—from a Prevention Lead who coordinates all activities at the community level to Dating Matters coaches and program facilitators who carry out the programs with parents. The key responsibilities and skill sets for each of the staff roles are described below. The Dating Matter Guide to Implementation provides more detail on each of these roles.

- **Prevention Lead:** The Prevention Lead should have the skills and experience to oversee a comprehensive prevention initiative and engage community stakeholders in teen dating violence prevention.
 - Oversees implementing Dating Matters at the health department or community-based organizational level
 - Enhances the community's capacity to carry out teen dating violence prevention programs
 - Recruits and builds relationships with local schools
 - Engages community stakeholders and partners through a community advisory board
 - Supervises coaches and facilitators
 - Monitors the budget and ensures sustainability
- **Dating Matters Coach:** Coaches are staff of the health department or community organization overseeing Dating Matters who are responsible for supervising and supporting youth and parent program facilitators. Coaches should have experience providing health education to parents and supervising prevention program implementation.
 - Supervises and supports parent program facilitators
 - Oversees access to facilitator training and program materials for parent program facilitators
 - Completes in-person interactive portions of training for parent program facilitators
 - Observes parent program facilitators to provide ongoing feedback and skill development in program facilitation
 - Completes fidelity checks to ensure adherence to session content
- **Parent Program Facilitators:** Parent program facilitators should have experience and skills working with parents, especially parents of teens. They should feel comfortable delivering health education and facilitating engaging, open dialogue about difficult topics. Parent programs can be carried out by health department staff or other community-based health educators.
 - Complete facilitator training
 - Engage in ongoing efforts with a Dating Matters coach to improve program quality and fidelity
 - Deliver session content to parents of youth in grades 6, 7, and 8

FACILITATOR TRAINING

Organizations can access free training for Dating Matters coaches and parent program facilitators through the [Dating Matters Toolkit website](#). Facilitator certification is required to carry out the Dating Matters 6th and 7th grade parent programs. Facilitator training, including online modules and in-person supplemental activities with a Dating Matters coach, should take about 10 hours.

PROGRAM MATERIALS

The CDC provides all materials needed to carry out Dating Matters Parent Programs for 6th and 7th grades at no cost. Printing costs, estimated below, may apply. Materials include:

- Parent Program Facilitator Guides
- Parent Handbooks
- Coaches' Playbook

Families for Safe Dates (8th grade) materials include a set of six printed booklets mailed home to parents in succession. Printed materials revised for use with the Dating Matters model are available for order at http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Pages/Families_for_Safe_Dates_Resources.aspx. Price estimates are provided below. The original self-printable PDF version of the program is also included with purchase of the Safe Dates youth program from the publisher (<http://www.hazelden.org/web/public/safedates.page>).

For more detailed information on accessing Dating Matters parent program materials, please see the [Dating Matters Toolkit website](#).

FACILITY NEEDS

In-person sessions for the Dating Matters Parent Programs can be held in a classroom setting after school or at another community facility, like a recreation center, church, or library. A comfortable location convenient for parents with easy access to parking or public transit is ideal. Access to projection equipment on-site is helpful. Some communities may choose to provide childcare during the program to help parents participate. If so, facilities with a separate space for childcare would be needed.

COST

Costs associated with carrying out the **Dating Matters Parent Programs** are specific to the community and can vary depending on staffing, administrative, facility, and printing costs as well as the number of parents and classrooms served.

Type of Cost	Specific Costs	Estimated Cost
Staffing	Prevention Lead	1 full-time employee per community ¹
	Coach	1 full-time employee per community ¹
	Parent Program Facilitators	.5 full-time employee per community
Program Materials	Dating Matters Parent Programs (6th and 7th Grade)	
	Posters, 6th Grade Parent Program	Free print copies available from CDC
	Parent Handbooks	\$4-5/parent participant per program to self-print (color)
	Facilitator Guides	\$10-15/facilitator per program to self-print (color)
	Families for Safe Dates (8th Grade)	
	Parent Booklets (set of 6)	\$3 per family, print copies available for order
	Postage to mail booklets to parents	\$3 per family
	Facilitator Training	
	Online Training Course	Free
Facilities	Staff Time	Approx. 10 hours
	Space at school or a partner organization	No additional cost
	Participation Support and Incentives	
	Child care on-site	Cost varies (optional)
	Meals or snacks during group sessions	Cost varies (optional)
	Door prizes, cash incentives	Cost varies (optional)

See the **Dating Matters Guide to Implementation** for more detailed guidance on staffing recommendations and budgeting.

¹ Only one Prevention Lead and Coach are needed per community; these costs are not replicated for each component.

LEARN MORE ABOUT DATING MATTERS!

The Dating Matters Toolkit—with all of the materials, guidance, and tools you need to implement Dating Matters—is available on CDC's VetoViolence website at vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/dating-matters-toolkit. The Toolkit is your one-stop-shop for everything Dating Matters.